

Remarks

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9 and 11 are currently pending. By this amendment, claim 1 is amended and claim 10 is canceled.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Iida (USP 4,132,124) (hereinafter “Iida”) in view of Mizelle (USP 3,800,337) (hereinafter “Mizelle”).

Claims 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iida in view of Mizelle and further in view of Kataumi (USP 6,148,686) (hereinafter “Kataumi”).

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

II. Claim Objections

Claim 1 is objected to because the term “quadrangle” does not appear to be a term used in the art.

Claim 10 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 (c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim.

In light of the foregoing amendments, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

III. Pending Claims

Independent claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Iida in view of Mizelle.

Claim 1 is patentable over the cited references at least because it recites, “...shift lever being supported by said lever-side link element and being fixed to said lever-side link element, and said base member supporting said base-side link element.” (emphasis added)

Iida discloses a shift lever using a four-bar linkage. However, in contrast to the present application, in Iida the shift lever 1 pivots about a ball fulcrum 7 rotatably supported in a shift lever housing 4 in FIG. 1 of Iida. Therefore, in Iida, the shift lever 1 is not fixed to the link elements 12 and 17 and can incline relative to the link elements 12 and 17 about point G. See

FIG. 4 of Iida. As a result, Iida cannot address the problems caused by inclination (rotation about the rotational axis P) of the shift lever 3 as discussed in at least paragraphs [0007]-[0009] of the present application as published.

The present application regards a shift lever being supported by a lever-side link element and being fixed to said lever-side link element so as not to rotate relative to the lever-side link element. Since the shift lever apparatus 10 of the present application is provided with one or more four-bar linkage mechanisms 40, a motion of the shift lever 30 in the operational plane 46 of the four-bar linkage mechanism 40 is changed from a rotational motion to a parallel or substantially parallel shift motion accompanied by no pivot motion relative to the lever-side element. As a result, the operational feeling of the shift lever 30 can be improved compared with the rotational shift lever of other shift lever apparatuses.

The Applicant respectfully submits that for at least these reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references.

IV. Conclusion

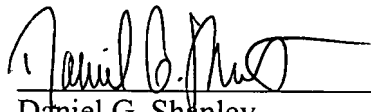
In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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